

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 22134

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH THINKING ON PARTICIPATION IN ENERGY
COOPERATION PROGRAM

DEPT PASS OTHER POSTS AS DESIRED

REF: A. PARIS 21328; B. PARIS 22026

1. FOLLOWING TELEPHONE CALL REPORTED REF B, ECON/COM
MIN CALLED ON BRUNET, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, MFA,
AT LATTER'S REQUEST FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THIS AND
OTHER MATTERS. IN THE ENSUING CONVERSATION, BRUNET SAID
THAT NOW THAT HE WAS "NO LONGER UNDER WRAPS" BECAUSE OF
THE LEAK ON THE WASHINGTON MEETING, HE COULD SPEAK MORE
FRANKLY ABOUT GOF THINKING ON PARTICIPATION IN THE
ENERGY COOPERATION PROGRAM. HE SAID THAT IN FACT THE
GOF WAS QUITE INTERESTED IN THE PROGRAM BUT HAD CERTAIN
QUESTIONS WHICH IT HAD WANTED TO EXPLORE IN A FRANK AND
OPEN MANNER WITH THE SECRETARY. THE FRENCH BELIEVED
THAT SUCH A FRANK DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUES WAS IMPOS-
SIBLE IN A PUBLIC FORUM LIKE THE WASHINGTON ENERGY
CONFERENCE AND WAS THUS PLEASED THAT THE DISCUSSIONS ON
SCHEDULING THE MEETING OF FOREIGN AND FINANCE MINISTERS
IN WASHINGTON LATER THIS MONTH HAD BEEN TAKING PLACE IN
SECRET. HE HOPED VERY MUCH THAT THE PRESS LEAK WOULD
NOT FORCE THE GOF TO RECONSIDER ITS PARTICIPATION IN
THIS MEETING. HE WAS ENCOURAGED THAT THIS EVENING'S
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"LE MONDE" CARRIED ONLY A BRIEF FACTUAL REPORT ON THE

MEETING.

2. ECON/COM MIN ASKED BRUNET WHY THE GOF WAS SO CONCERNED ABOUT THE FACTS GETTING OUT. WERE THEY AFRAID OF AROUSING THE WRATH OF ORTHODOX GAULLISTS? BRUNET REPLIED THAT THIS WAS NOT REALLY THE PROBLEM. GISCARD WAS NOT WORRIED ABOUT ATTACKS FROM DEBRE OR JOBERT. HIS POSITION IN THE COUNTRY WAS STRONG ENOUGH SO THAT HE COULD IGNORE THEM. BUT IF HE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM, HE WOULD BE OBLIGED TO EXPLAIN TO THE COUNTRY WHY WHAT WAS WRONG IN FEBRUARY WAS RIGHT NOW. TO BE ABLE TO DO THIS, HE HAD TO BE SURE THAT THE ENERGY COOPERATION PROGRAM BEING DEVELOPED BY THE ECG WOULD REALLY ACHIEVE WHAT THE U.S. AND THE GOF AGREED WAS THE MAIN OBJECTIVE, NAMELY, GETTING ASSURANCES OF ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF OIL AT FAIR PRICES. THE GOF WAS NOT YET CONVINCED THAT THE PROGRAMS PROPOSED BY THE ECG COULD ACCOMPLISH THIS. HENCE ITS DESIRE FOR FRANK, OPEN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE USG IN WASHINGTON. HE REPEATED THAT HE VERY MUCH HOPED THAT THE GOF WOULD BE ABLE TO GO AHEAD WITH ITS PLANNED PARTICIPATION IN THE WASHINGTON MEETING IN SPITE OF THE PRESS LEAK.

3. COMMENT: THIS CONVERSATION CONFIRMS THE VIEW REPORTED REF A THAT GOF HESITATION ABOUT PARTICIPATION IN THE ENERGY COOPERATION PROGRAM IS CAUSED MAINLY BY TECHNICAL RATHER THAN POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS.
IRWIN

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